

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, MX, CU

SUBJECT: MEXICO, CUBA, AND FISHING BOATS

REF: STATE 24094

1. DURING HIS CURRENT TOUR OF YUCATAN, PRES ECHEVERRIA TOOK TIME OUT IN COZUMEL TO CHRISTEN TWENTY FISHING BOATS JUST RECEIVED FROM CUBA AND TO BOAST THAT THERE ARE "NO TWO COUNT-RIES IN LATIN AMERICA WITH BETTER RELATIONS THAN MEXICO AND CUBA." ECHEVERRIA SAID THAT MEXICO'S PURCHASE OF THE CUBAN BOATS WAS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SORT OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNO-LOGICAL COLLABORATION NEEDED IF LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS WERE TO OVERCOME BEING THE "DIS-UNITED STATES OF THE SOUTH." (AN AIDE TO ECHEVERRIA SAID THAT THE BOATS COULD JUST AS WELL HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN MEXICO'S OWN SHIPYARDS IF THESE HAD NOT BEEN JAMMED WITH OTHER CURRENT PROJECTS.)

2. ACCORDING TO A REPORT CARRIED BY SEMI-OFFICIAL "EL NACIONAL", EACH OF THE CUBAN-BUILT BOATS MEASURED 16 METERS IN LENGTH BY 4.90 IN THE BEAM, WITH A MAXIMUM DRAFT OF 1.48 METERS AND A DISPLACEMENT OF 40 TONS. CONSTRUCTION IS OF STEEL RIBS AND PLASTICIZED WIRE MESH FILLED WITH A SAND-SILICATE MORTER-- A TECHNIQUE DESCRIBED AS "RELATIVELY NEW TO THE FISHING WORLD." THE BOATS ARE REPORTEDLY DESIGNED FOR COASTAL AND PLATFORM FISHING IN TROPICAL AND SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS. SPEED IS UNCLASSIFIED

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SAID TO BE EIGHT KNOTS, AND MAXIMUM SERVICE AT SEA FIVE AND

ONE-HALF DAYS. THE BOATS WERE BUILT BY "CUBAPESCA" AT CARDENAS AND MANZANILLO, EVIDENTLY ON THE BASIS OF A CONTRACT SIGNED DURING OR AFTER ECHEVERRIA'S VISIT TO HAVANA LAST AUGUST. THEY ARE SCHEDULED TO BE USED AS TRAINING BOATS AMONG THE 30-ODD FISHING "TECHNOLOGY" SCHOOLS NOW RUN BY THE GOM AROUND THE COUNTRY.

3. PRESENT FOR THE CEREMONY WAS CUBA'S MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIBAL VELAZ, WHO ASSURED ECHEVERRIA THAT CUBA FULLY SUPPORTED MEXICO'S CLAIM OF A 200-MILE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE. VELAZ ADDED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES' INTERESTS IN THE GULF WOULD BE "FULLY HARMONIZED."
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